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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1071**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 7/05/2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 12 OF 2021**

**Ms C V King (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

What (a) total number of students who are National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) beneficiaries (i) registered and (ii) completed their studies at institutions of higher learning in each of the past five academic years, (b) was the dropout rate of NSFAS-funded students in each of the specified academic years and (c) has he found to be the average dropout rate of NSFAS-funded students since the inception of the NSFAS?

**NW1258E**

**REPLY:**

The NSFAS cohort study considers any student who received NSFAS funding at any point in time during their studies. The database of students who had received NSFAS funding in all previous years of study is mapped to the Higher Education Management Information System dataset. The NSFAS cohort study published in March 2020 considered all cohorts that entered the public higher education sector, i.e. universities, for the first time from the 2000 to 2017 academic years. The study found that the dropout rate for the 2009 NSFAS cohort was 22.2%, which is 9% lower than the national cohort average of 31.3%.

It should be noted that in order to determine how students, including NSFAS students, are performing, at least 4 years of data is required for a 3-year qualification and 5 years of data for 4-year qualification. The Department is currently in the process of updating the cohort report for this year.